

Workplace Housekeeping



Why should we pay attention to housekeeping at work?

Effective housekeeping can eliminate some workplace hazards and help get a job done safely and properly. Poor housekeeping can frequently contribute to accidents by hiding hazards that cause injuries. If the sight of paper, debris, clutter and spills is accepted as normal, then other more serious health and safety hazards may be taken for granted.

Housekeeping is not just cleanliness. It includes keeping work areas neat and orderly; maintaining halls and floors free of slip and trip hazards; and removing of waste materials (e.g., paper, cardboard) and other fire hazards from work areas. It also requires paying attention to important details such as the layout of the whole workplace, aisle marking, the adequacy of storage facilities, and maintenance. Good housekeeping is also a basic part of accident and fire prevention.

Effective housekeeping is an ongoing operation: it is not a hit-and-miss cleanup done occasionally. Periodic "panic" cleanups are costly and ineffective in reducing accidents.

What is the purpose of workplace housekeeping?

Poor housekeeping can be a cause of accidents, such as:

- tripping over loose objects on floors, stairs and platforms
- being hit by falling objects
- slipping on greasy, wet or dirty surfaces
- striking against projecting, poorly stacked items or misplaced material
- cutting, puncturing, or tearing the skin of hands or other parts of the body on projecting nails, wire or steel strapping

To avoid these hazards, a workplace must "maintain" order throughout a workday. Although this effort requires a great deal of management and planning, the benefits are many.

What are some benefits of good housekeeping practices?

Effective housekeeping results in:

- reduced handling to ease the flow of materials
- fewer tripping and slipping accidents in clutter-free and spill-free work areas
- decreased fire hazards
- lower worker exposures to hazardous substances (e.g. dusts, vapours)
- better control of tools and materials, including inventory and supplies
- more efficient equipment cleanup and maintenance
- better hygienic conditions leading to improved health
- more effective use of space
- reduced property damage by improving preventive maintenance
- less janitorial work
- improved morale
- improved productivity (tools and materials will be easy to find)

How do I plan a good housekeeping program?

A good housekeeping program plans and manages the orderly storage and movement

of materials from point of entry to exit. It includes a material flow plan to ensure minimal handling. The plan also ensures that work areas are not used as storage areas by having workers move materials to and from work areas as needed. Part of the plan could include investing in extra bins and more frequent disposal.

The costs of this investment could be offset by the elimination of repeated handling of the same material and more effective use of the workers' time. Often, ineffective or insufficient storage planning results in materials being handled and stored in hazardous ways. Knowing the plant layout and the movement of materials throughout the workplace can help plan work procedures.

Worker training is an essential part of any good housekeeping program. Workers need to know how to work safely with the products they use. They also need to know how to protect other workers such as by posting signs (e.g., "Wet - Slippery Floor") and reporting any unusual conditions.

Housekeeping order is "maintained" not "achieved." Cleaning and organization must be done regularly, not just at the end of the shift. Integrating housekeeping into jobs can help ensure this is done. A good housekeeping program identifies and assigns responsibilities for the following:

- clean up during the shift
- day-to-day cleanup
- waste disposal
- removal of unused materials
- inspection to ensure cleanup is complete

Do not forget out-of-the-way places such as shelves, basements, sheds, and boiler rooms that would otherwise be overlooked. The orderly arrangement of operations, tools, equipment and supplies is an important part of a good housekeeping program.

The final addition to any housekeeping program is inspection. It is the only way to check for deficiencies in the program so that changes can be made. The documents on workplace inspection checklists provide a general guide and examples of checklists for inspecting offices and manufacturing facilities.

What are the elements of an effective housekeeping program?

Dust and Dirt Removal

In some jobs, enclosures and exhaust ventilation systems may fail to collect dust, dirt and chips adequately. Vacuum cleaners are suitable for removing light dust and dirt. Industrial models have special fittings for cleaning walls, ceilings, ledges, machinery, and other hard-to-reach places where dust and dirt may accumulate.

Special-purpose vacuums are useful for removing hazardous substances. For example, vacuum cleaners fitted with HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters may be used to capture fine particles of asbestos or fibreglass.

Dampening (wetting) floors or using sweeping compounds before sweeping reduces the amount of airborne dust. The dust and grime that collect in places like shelves, piping, conduits, light fixtures, reflectors, windows, cupboards and lockers may require manual cleaning.

Compressed air should not be used for removing dust, dirt or chips from equipment or work surfaces.

Employee Facilities

Employee facilities need to be adequate, clean and well maintained. Lockers are necessary for storing employees' personal belongings. Washroom facilities require cleaning once or more each shift. They also need to have a good supply of soap, towels plus disinfectants, if needed.

If workers are using hazardous materials, employee facilities should provide special precautions such as showers, washing facilities and change rooms. Some facilities may require two locker rooms with showers between. Using such double locker rooms allows workers to shower off workplace contaminants and prevents them from contaminating their "street clothes" by keeping their work clothes separated from the clothing that they wear home.

Smoking, eating or drinking in the work area should be prohibited where toxic materials are handled. The eating area should be separate from the work area and should be cleaned properly each shift.

Surfaces

Floors: Poor floor conditions are a leading cause of accidents so cleaning up spilled oil and other liquids at once is important. Allowing chips, shavings and dust to accumulate can also cause accidents. Trapping chips, shavings and dust before they reach the floor or cleaning them up regularly can prevent their accumulation. Areas that cannot be cleaned continuously, such as entrance ways, should have anti-slip flooring. Keeping floors in good order also means replacing any worn, ripped, or damaged flooring that poses a tripping hazard.

Walls: Light-coloured walls reflect light while dirty or dark-coloured walls absorb light. Contrasting colours warn of physical hazards and mark obstructions such as pillars. Paint can highlight railings, guards and other safety equipment, but should never be used as a substitute for guarding. The program should outline the regulations and standards for colours.

Maintain Light Fixtures

Dirty light fixtures reduce essential light levels. Clean light fixtures can improve lighting efficiency significantly.

Aisles and Stairways

Aisles should be wide enough to accommodate people and vehicles comfortably and safely. Aisle space allows for the movement of people, products and materials. Warning signs and mirrors can improve sight-lines in blind corners. Arranging aisles properly encourages people to use them so that they do not take shortcuts through hazardous areas.

Keeping aisles and stairways clear is important. They should not be used for temporary "overflow" or "bottleneck" storage. Stairways and aisles also require adequate lighting.

Spill Control

The best way to control spills is to stop them before they happen. Regularly cleaning and maintaining machines and equipment is one way. Another is to use drip pans and guards where possible spills might occur. When spills do occur, it is important to clean them up immediately. Absorbent materials are useful for wiping up greasy, oily or other liquid spills. Used absorbents must be disposed of properly and safely.

Tools and Equipment

Tool housekeeping is very important, whether in the tool room, on the rack, in the yard, or on the bench. Tools require suitable fixtures with marked locations to provide orderly arrangement, both in the tool room and near the work bench. Returning them promptly after use reduces the chance of being misplaced or lost. Workers should regularly inspect, clean and repair all tools and take any damaged or worn tools out of service.

Maintenance

The maintenance of buildings and equipment may be the most important element of good housekeeping. Maintenance involves keeping buildings, equipment and machinery in safe, efficient working order and in good repair. This includes maintaining sanitary facilities and regularly painting and cleaning walls. Broken windows, damaged doors, defective plumbing and broken floor surfaces can make a workplace look neglected; these conditions can cause accidents and affect work practices. So it is important to replace or fix broken or damaged items as quickly as possible. A good maintenance program provides for the inspection, maintenance, upkeep and repair of tools, equipment, machines and processes.

Waste Disposal

The regular collection, grading and sorting of scrap contribute to good housekeeping practices. It also makes it possible to separate materials that can be recycled from those going to waste disposal facilities.

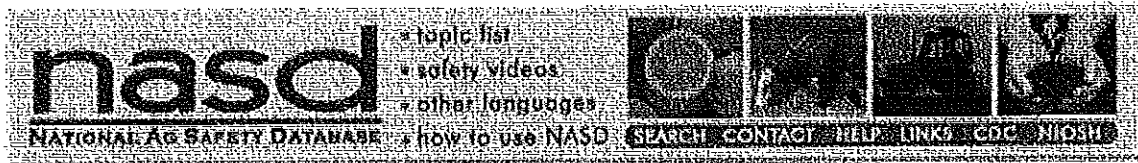
Allowing material to build up on the floor wastes time and energy since additional time is required for cleaning it up. Placing scrap containers near where the waste is produced encourages orderly waste disposal and makes collection easier. All waste receptacles should be clearly labelled (e.g., recyclable glass, plastic, scrap metal, etc.).

Storage

Good organization of stored materials is essential for overcoming material storage problems whether on a temporary or permanent basis. There will also be fewer strain injuries if the amount of handling is reduced, especially if less manual materials handling is required. The location of the stockpiles should not interfere with work but they should still be readily available when required. Stored materials should allow at least one metre (or about three feet) of clear space under sprinkler heads.

Stacking cartons and drums on a firm foundation and cross tying them, where necessary, reduces the chance of their movement. Stored materials should not obstruct aisles, stairs, exits, fire equipment, emergency eyewash fountains, emergency showers, or first aid stations. All storage areas should be clearly marked.

Flammable, combustible, toxic and other hazardous materials should be stored in approved containers in designated areas that are appropriate for the different hazards that they pose. Storage of materials should meet all requirements specified in the fire codes and the regulations of environmental and occupational health and safety agencies in your jurisdiction.



General Housekeeping in the Workplace



Versión Española

Version Française

Farm Safety Association, Inc.

Instructor:

The following script can be used to deliver a 15-minute training session to employees.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE

- Floors and other areas.
- Aisles and stairways.
- Spill control.
- Equipment and machinery maintenance.
- Storage.
- Fire prevention.
- Waste disposal.
- Maintain light fixtures.

Effective house keeping can eliminate some workplace hazards and help get a job done easily and properly.

A good housekeeping program plans and manages the orderly storage and movement of materials from point of entry to exit. It includes a material flow plan to ensure minimal handling.

Worker training is an essential part of any good housekeeping program. They should be reporting any unusual conditions or hazards as well as obeying posted warning signs.

The final addition to any housekeeping program is inspection. It is the only way to check for deficiencies in the program so that changes can be made.

Floors and other areas

Clean up spills such as oil on floors immediately. Floors should be free of debris and accumulations of dust. Areas that cannot be cleaned continuously, such as entranceways, should have anti-slip flooring.

Replace any worn, ripped or damaged flooring that poses a tripping hazard. Repair all trap doors and railings. Any equipment or tools not in use should be removed from the work area.

Guard floor openings. Trap doors, cages or railings around hay chutes will prevent anyone from accidentally falling into them.

Cut down and remove weeds and brush from around buildings. They can hide tripping hazards.

Maintain light fixtures

All buildings and yards should be adequately lighted. Dirty light fixtures reduce essential light levels. Light fixtures in storage areas containing combustible materials should be protected against breaking (i.e. explosion proof fixtures).

Maintain lighting evenly, since shadows mixed with light spots inside animal handling facilities will increase the animal's fear and tension.

Aisles and stairways

Aisles and stairways should be clearly marked and kept clear of objects that can cause trips and falls.

Aisles should be wide enough to accommodate people and vehicles comfortably and safely. Warning signs and mirrors can improve sight lines at blind corners. Properly arranged aisles encourage people to use them so that they do not take "shortcuts" or "bottleneck" storage. Stairways and aisles also require adequate lighting.

Spill control

The best way to control spills is to stop them before they happen. Regularly cleaning and maintaining machines and equipment is one way to do this. Another is to use drip pans and guards where possible spills might occur. When spills do occur, it is important to follow cleanup procedures as indicated on the Material Safety Data Sheet.

Spills must be cleaned up immediately. Absorbent material is useful for wiping up greasy, oily or other liquid spills. Used absorbents must be disposed of properly and safely.

Tools and equipment

Keeping tools neat and orderly can be very important to everyone's safety, whether in the tool room, on the rack, in the yard, or on the bench.

Returning tools promptly after use reduces the chance of them being misplaced or lost. Workers should regularly inspect, clean and repair all tools and take any damaged or worn tools out of service.

Maintenance

A good maintenance program provides for the inspection, maintenance, upkeep and repair of tools, equipment, machines and processes.

Maintenance involves keeping buildings, equipment and machinery in safe efficient working order and in good repair. This includes maintaining sanitary facilities and regularly painting and cleaning walls, maintaining windows, damaged doors, defective plumbing and broken floor surfaces.

Waste disposal

The regular collection, grading and sorting of scrap contributes to good housekeeping practices. Allowing materials to build up on the floor wastes time and energy since additional time is required for cleaning it up.

Placing scrap containers near where the waste is produced encourages orderly waste disposal and makes collection easier. All waste receptacles should be clearly labeled (e.g., recyclable glass, plastic, metal, toxic and flammable etc.) All waste containers should be emptied regularly.

Storage

Stored materials should allow at least one meter (or about 3 feet) of clear space under sprinkler heads. Stacking cartons and drums on a firm foundation and cross tying them, where necessary reduces the chance of their movement. Stored materials should not obstruct aisles, stairs, exits, fire equipment, emergency eyewash fountains, emergency showers, or first aid stations.

All storage areas should be clearly marked

Fire prevention

Flammable, combustible, toxic and other hazardous materials should be stored in approved containers in designated areas that are appropriate for the different hazards that they pose.

All combustible and flammable material must be present only in the quantities needed for the job and kept in

safety cans during use. Oily or greasy rags should be placed in a metal container and disposed of regularly.

Are there any questions?

Finally, let's take a moment to review some of the Do's and Don'ts of housekeeping

DO:	DON'T:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep floors clean and clear of waste.• Keep workplaces adequately lighted.• Keep light fixtures clean.• Inspect and clean machinery and tools regularly.• Clean up spills immediately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use aisles and stairways as storage areas.• Allow materials to build up on floors.• Block emergency exits, fire equipment or first aid stations with stored materials.• Store compressed gases near heat sources.

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WALKING-WORKING SURFACES SAFETY CHECKLIST - provided by OSHA

General work environment safety checklist.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is a documented, functioning housekeeping program in place?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all worksites clean, sanitary, and orderly?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are work surfaces kept dry or is appropriate means taken to assure the surfaces are slip-resistant?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all spilled hazardous materials or liquids, including blood and other potentially infectious materials, cleaned up immediately and according to proper procedures?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is combustible scrap, debris and waste stored safely and removed from the worksite properly?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is all regulated waste, as defined in the OSHA bloodborne pathogens standard (1910.1030), discarded according to federal, state, and local regulations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are accumulations of combustible dust routinely removed from elevated surfaces including the overhead structure of buildings, etc.?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is combustible dust cleaned up with a vacuum system to prevent the dust from going into suspension?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is metallic or conductive dust prevented from entering or accumulating on or around electrical enclosures or equipment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are covered metal waste cans used for oily and paint-soaked waste?

Walkways safety checklist.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Are aisles and passageways kept clear?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are aisles and walkways marked as appropriate?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are wet surfaces covered with non-slip materials?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are holes in the floor, sidewalk or other walking surface repaired properly, covered or otherwise made safe?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there safe clearance for walking in aisles where motorized or mechanical handling equipment is operating?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are materials or equipment stored in such a way that sharp projectives will not interfere with the walkway?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are spilled materials cleaned up immediately?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are changes of direction or elevation readily identifiable?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are aisles or walkways that pass near moving or operating machinery, welding operations or similar operations arranged so employees will not be subjected to potential hazards?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is adequate headroom provided for the entire length of any aisle or walkway?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are standard guardrails provided wherever aisle or walkway surfaces are elevated more than 30 inches above any adjacent floor or the ground?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are bridges provided over conveyors and similar hazards?

Floor and wall openings safety checklist.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Are floor openings guarded by a cover, a guardrail, or equivalent on all sides (except at entrance to stairways or ladders)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are toeboards installed around the edges of permanent floor openings (where persons may pass below the opening)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are skylight screens of such construction and mounting that they will withstand a load of at least 200 pounds?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the glass in the windows, doors, glass walls, etc., which are subject to human impact, of sufficient thickness and type for the condition of use?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are grates or similar type covers over floor openings such as floor drains of such design that foot traffic or rolling equipment will not be affected by the grate spacing?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are unused portions of service pits and pits not actually in use either covered or protected by guardrails or equivalent?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Are manhole covers, trench covers and similar covers, plus their supports designed to carry a truck rear axle load of at least 20,000 pounds when located in roadways and subject to vehicle traffic?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are floor or wall openings in fire resistive construction provided with doors or covers compatible with the fire rating of the structure and provided with a self-closing feature when appropriate?

Stairs and stairways safety checklists.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Are standard stair rails or handrails on all stairways having four or more risers?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all stairways at least 22 inches wide?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do stairs have landing platforms not less than 30 inches in the direction of travel and extend 22 inches in width at every 12 feet or less of vertical rise?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do stairs angle no more than 50 and no less than 30 degrees?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are step risers on stairs uniform from top to bottom?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are steps on stairs and stairways designed or provided with a surface that renders them slip resistant?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are stairway handrails located between 30 and 34 inches above the leading edge of stair treads?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do stairway handrails have at least 3 inches of clearance between the handrails and the wall or surface they are mounted on?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Where doors or gates open directly on a stairway, is there a platform provided so the swing of the door does not reduce the width of the platform to less than 21 inches?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Where stairs or stairways exit directly into any area where vehicles may be operated, are adequate barriers and warnings provided to prevent employees stepping into the path of traffic?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do stairway landings have a dimension measured in the direction of travel, at least equal to the width of the stairway?

Elevated surfaces safety checklists.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Are signs posted, when appropriate, showing the elevated surface load capacity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are surfaces elevated more than 30 inches above the floor or ground provided with standard guardrails?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all elevated surfaces (beneath which people or machinery could be exposed to falling objects) provided with standard 4-inch toeboards?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is a permanent means of access and egress provided to elevated storage and work surfaces?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is required headroom provided where necessary?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is material on elevated surfaces piled, stacked or racked in a manner to prevent it from tipping, falling, collapsing, rolling or spreading?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are dock boards or bridge plates used when transferring materials between docks and trucks or rail cars?

